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ABSTRACT

The third of three booklets dealing with educational accountability, this booklet describes a method for a school to use in reporting to its community and, in so doing, to revalidate its goals. The process for updating or revalidating a school's educational goals includes four steps: (1) involving the school in preparing a report of past effort to fulfill the present goals; (2) providing for the community to receive the school's progress report and allowing for the participants to respond; (3) assembling and categorizing the responses to the school's progress report into an updated set of goal statements and recommendations; and (4) involving the steering committee in the procedure of reporting its updated goals to the governing board and, finally, following board approval, distributing the goals to the public. (Author/MLF)

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A Process for Revalidation of Community-Based Goals

VOL. III

GOALS

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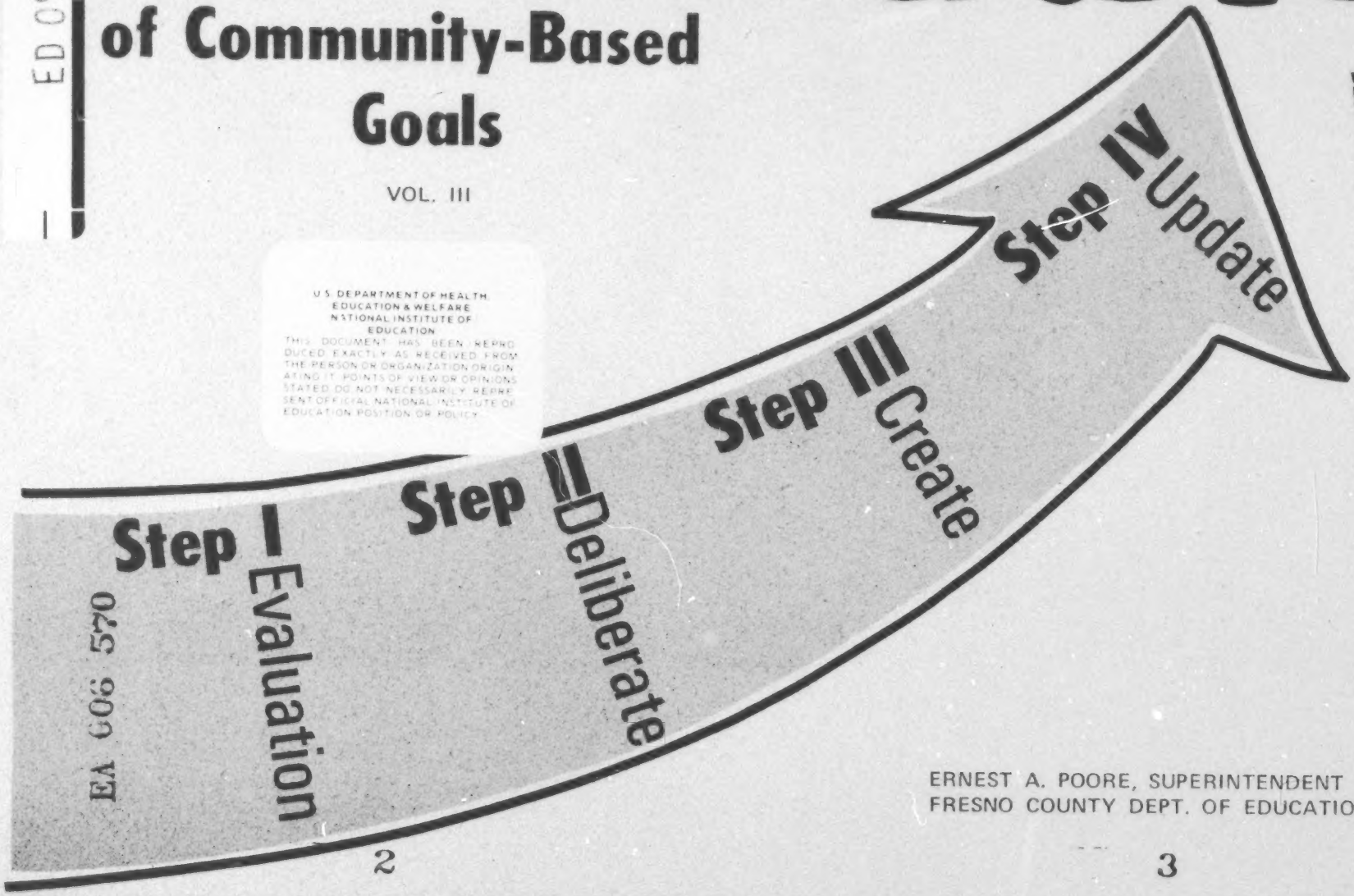

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A PROCESS FOR REVALIDATION OF COMMUNITY-BASED GOALS

VOLUME III

Fresno County Department of Education
Fresno, California
ERNEST A. POORE, Superintendent

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A PROCESS FOR REVALIDATION OF COMMUNITY-BASED GOALS

INTRODUCTION

"We make a move, instantly evaluate the effect of our action, and adjust our next action accordingly." Engineers call this process "Feedback." Educators call it educational accountability.

California's Joint Legislative Committee on Goals and Evaluation has encouraged all public schools to adopt educational goals with wide community participation.

The California School Boards Association has urged us to "make the establishment of new educational goals a top priority item . . ."

Beginning September 1974, the State Department of Education and the Joint Legislative Committee will undertake a process of collecting and cataloging the goals of all California school districts.

There appears to be little room for doubt that the establishment of goals locally is essential to meeting our responsibilities.

The challenge then arises after a year or two for the school and community to take inventory of their past efforts. To assess their successes and yes, to identify the failures, in terms of how effective have we been in generating change. If goals are targets or directions toward improvement, then there comes a time to pause and take inventory, to ask jointly, "how have we been doing, are we progressing as intended or do we need to alter our direction?"

The following process, Volume III, in the Fresno County Department of Educations' publications dealing with educational accountability, is a recommended method for a school to utilize in order to report to its community; and in doing so, to Revalidate Their Goals.

The principal goal of education is to create men who are capable of doing new things, not simply of repeating what other generations have done – men who are creative, inventive discoverers. The second goal of education is to form minds which can be critical, can verify, and not accept everything they are offered.

J. Piaget

WHERE HAVE WE BEEN?

In recent years, under the prodding and/or encouragement of the California Legislature and the County Schools Office, schools joined hands with their community in a cooperative effort to plan for the future.

Around a piece of butcher paper and over a cup of coffee, you reacted to the question: "What Are the Things That Are Keeping Our School From Doing the Job It Should Do?" Later, your friends and neighbors assessed their school in terms of, "What Are the Things Our School *Should* Be Doing for the Student of This Community?" And they thought in terms of knowledge, skills and attitudes the student should attain.

Following the goal-setting process, the next critical link in your path toward accountability involved the development of some really relevant, measurable objectives. Here's where the professional staff showed their experience and dedication as they united to develop the statements to make your goals become reality. In an orderly manner, you determined *what* the performer was to do, *how* you were going to proceed, *when* you planned to arrive and most important, how you would *measure* or *evaluate* your efforts. Now you have orderly moved the system or its learners from *what is* to *what should be.*

The time has now arrived for your school to "report back" to its community, student body and staff. In your quest for a quality educational program, you agree that goals must not be taken for granted nor may they be laid to rest. Goals call for action, for movement, for analysis and reassessment.

Goals must constantly be tested as to their relevance, timeliness, degree of progress, probability of fulfillment and possession of constraints.

The activities that follow, will assist you in reassessing your present goal statements. Further, you will be challenged to plan for an exciting educational future as you assess: (1) where we have been; (2) where do we wish to go; and (3) how shall we proceed?

The process of reassessing a schools' present goals will necessarily weigh heavily upon the sincerity and objective leadership provided by the administration. Where else can accountability for action and involvement be directed than to the educational leader? President Harry Truman preferred to state it more succinctly when he said, "*Leadership* is where the buck stops being passed."

.....To fail to plan, is to plan to fail.

OVERVIEW – THE FRESNO COUNTY PROCESS

The Fresno County process for updating or revalidating a school's educational goals includes four steps:

STEP I – Involves the school in preparing a report of past effort to fulfill the present goals. In essence, it is the "Moment of Truth." Have we conscientiously and sincerely made an effort to keep faith with the community by accepting the challenge to improve the educational offerings of our school, or have the goal statements become a neatly filed (and forgotten) document?

STEP II – Provides for the community to receive the school's progress report and allows for the participants to respond. Utilizing reponse cards provided, the public may take exception to the progress reported, they may concur, and, they are invited to offer recommendations for future action.

STEP III – Is the data collection and processing phase. Utilizing an augmented steering committee, the responses to the school's progress report are assembled and categorized into an updated set of goal statements and recommendations.

STEP IV – Completes the revalidation process. It involves the steering committee in the procedure of reporting its updated goals to the governing board (via the building principal) and finally the public distribution following board approval.

STEP I
EVALUATION

Perhaps the most important analysis of the schools progress toward fulfillment of the goals is undertaken prior to the forthcoming community-wide forum. The local principal, in concert with his staff, must assess the current status of every goal which was submitted at the community conference and ultimately adopted by the school board.

An honest, forthright assessment of your accomplishments, your present efforts and certainly your constraints and frustrations must be bared and examined as you honestly and sincerely determine:

1. What success has been realized in finally meeting the goal (if it has been achieved)?

2. What progress is currently being made or anticipated in the immediate future?

3. What major constraints or hurdles have prevented us from effecting progress?

4. What do we recommend and how shall we proceed?

Caution must be taken that the principals report to the people isn't clouded by isolated examples of strategies undertaken, personnel retained, funding acquired and specific tasks accomplished. Important as these endeavors may be, they do not project the real, hard core information the people are seeking and rightfully deserve. They are going to simply ask for proof of results — proof that all of the money, material and human energy has brought about change and improvement in lives of students. They are going to want hard, defendable documentation that there is now a difference between what *was* and what *is*. It is easy to show that we have acted, but have these actions made a difference in the lives of students?

The district's report to the community must be direct, specific and well documented with measurable data to substantiate all conclusions drawn. It must be written in laymens' terms and direct itself to program outcomes, not to methods or techniques; to learner improvement, not to processes or test scores alone.

NOW NOT TO REPORT

EXAMPLE: Goal: To provide a relevant educational program to benefit the minority students.

REVALIDATION REPORT: Lincoln School has hired four (4) bilingual aides, we now print our daily bulletin in English and Spanish and one day a week is reserved for the serving of Mexican entrees by our food service division.

Commendable efforts and procedures to be sure, but does this information fulfill the school's commitment to the community – to improve the lifestyle of the minority student, to provide a curriculum which will prepare him for the outside world? To guarantee the non-reader a world of reading experience or to open new avenues of healthful living and to broaden ones appreciation of his environment? These are the kinds of things we must direct our reports to in the name of educational accountability. These are the identifiable accomplishments which the public can understand.

Would it be meaningful to a concerned public to receive a report of the school's effort to meet the challenge of the minority student which included these statements:

> "Our program is designed to help students compensate for educational inequalities which may exist due to family migration. Utilizing federal funds provided under P.L. 89-10 of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act, these services are intended to expand the students' regular school experiences.
>
> "We initiated our program by identifying individual student needs through utilization of the diagnostic and prescriptive tests designed by our testing and research consultants. . . .After two years of participation we submit that the program should be continued and the goal actively pursued as a result of these accomplishments."
>
> A. In 1970, 20% of students receiving failing grades were migrants;
>
> In 1974, 10% of students receiving failing grades were migrants.
>
> B. In 1970, 60% of student-days' absences were derived by students of migrant families;
>
> In 1974, 30% of student-days' absences were derived by students of migrant families.

In conclusion, the first step in the goals revalidation process is the development of a fair and honest progress report covering all existing goals.

STEP II
DELIBERATE

Every means at your disposal should be utilized to generate attendance at a public forum at which time the building administrator will present the prepared progress report. It is important that the report be presented orally and that copies be available for all participants.

Although there will be some questions and comments from the audience following the progress report, caution should be exercised by the chairperson (not the administrator) to avoid entering the debate stage or to continue at length. (To do so will bore many, allow emotions to overtake logic and expend the time needed for the next phase.)

Following the principal's oral report, participants are invited to be seated 4 or 5 to a table on which a supply of 5 x 8 validation cards and an instruction sheet have been placed. (See Appendix A, Form A.)

Using the administrator's report as a guide, the group proceeds to respond to the district's report on each specific goal. By concensus they may indicate agreement, disagreement, or if desired they may make recommendations for future action.

Following the completion of all goal validation cards, the group then proceeds to the next process, generation of additional need statements. Using the supply of cards placed at each table, the participants are now encouraged to offer additional need statements for consideration as future school goals. (See Appendix A, Form B.)

Since most of the ideas generated at the revalidating meeting are usually reinforcing or duplicating of present goal statements, it is not recommended that they be circulated or discussed at the initial revalidating session. They will be processed during the next phase.

STEP III
CREATE

A representative committee comprised of the original steering committee members, staff, students and others who are committed to the effort, should convene another night for the purpose of tabulating the statements on the goal response cards, recording all comments and needs statements submitted.

Selection of the committee and responsibility for setting a meeting night should be delegated to a person other than the school principal who is already responsible for giving the progress report. Either a parent-teacher organization officer or the chairperson from the prior community conference would be an approprate choice. Every effort should be made to have a representative, cross-section of the community and staff for this important assignment of interpreting the goals of the citizenry and objectively reporting them to the administration and board. Needless to say, the more people involved, the more valid and representative will the finished product be. Drawing upon their knowledge and understanding of the school and its climate, this blue-ribbon group can assure expert handling of the publics' concerns and recommendations.

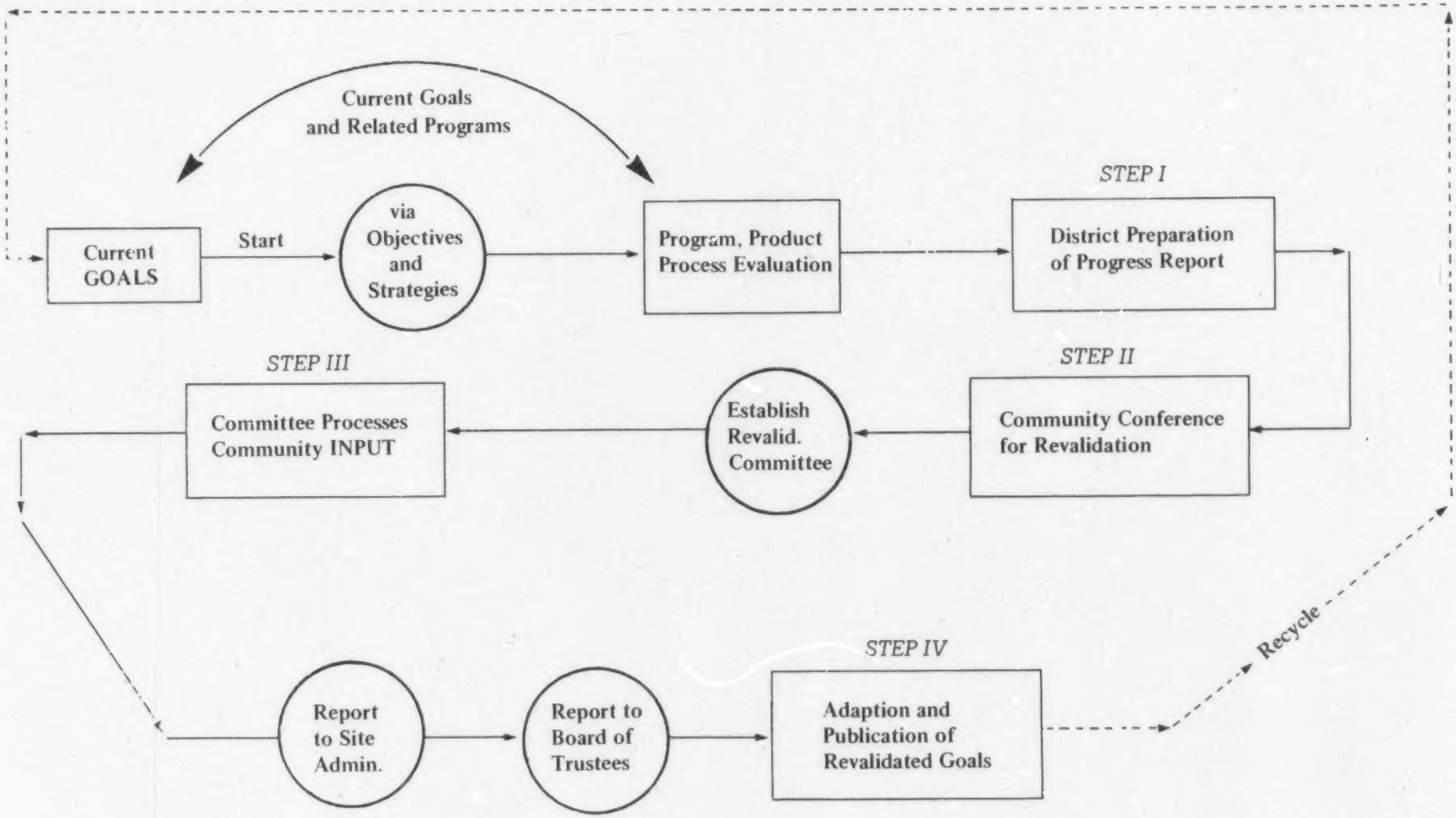
On the occasion of the steering committee meeting to process the data submitted, two procedures should be undertaken. Working first with the goal cards upon which an indication of "we agree" or "we disagree' has been indicated, a tabulation of responses is recorded for each goal. Along with this tabulation should be the recording of all comments submitted. Following the completion of this task, the committee is then ready to record information submitted on the cards identified as, "Needs Statements Not Currently Included In Our Schools' Goals." If possible, these statements should be recorded on a chalkboard, large sheets of butcher paper or in some manner to accommodate all participants. Under the leadership of the chairperson, the committee then determines: (1) the relevancy and appropriateness of each statement; (2) Which statements are common and, therefore, eligible for combining; and (3) the priority to assign to each statement.

Following the conclusion of the necessary discussion and study of the documents, the Committee For Revalidation of Our Schools' Goals can now prepare its majority report. Much as a grand jury must be objective and forthright in filing a report, so must the Revalidation Committee make every effort to confront each issue with equal consideration and weigh every statement in terms of its effect upon the school and its precious product.

STEP IV
UPDATE

It is highly recommended that the Revalidation Committee schedule a conference with the building principal, for the purpose of discussing their report prior to public circulation. The purpose of such a meeting is not necessarily to arrive at agreement or concurrence, but more as a courtesy and to maintain an air of cooperation and professional dignity. Based upon the public input, the Revalidation Committee is now prepared to submit its recommendations for revision, updating, deleting and adding to the schools' goal statements.

Upon acceptance by the assembly, the revised goals are now ready for submission to the board of trustees with a recommendation that they be officially adopted.



FLOW CHART

Flow Chart Used in Revalidation of Community-Based Goals

APPENDIX A

Examples of Instructions & Goal Revalidation Cards

PROCEDURE FOR THE REVALIDATING OF COMMUNITY BASED GOALS

"We make a move, instantly evaluate the effect of our action, and adjust our next action accordingly." Engineers call this process "feedback." Educators call it educational accountability.

In the not too distant past, your school district assessed its needs, determined its priorities and established its goals. Now it is time to take another look and ask yourselves, "How successful have you been toward fulfilling those needs"?

The process you are about to undertake involves three critical phases:

1. The administration's progress report of action (or constraints encountered) to date.

2. The community's response (either agreement, disagreement, or qualification) of the report presented.

3. The generation of new or current needs which need to be assessed in terms of impact on the education of our students.

Following the presentation of a progress report by your school representative, you will be requested to join other members of the staff and community in responding to the progress report. This response activity is very similar to the original goal-setting process. You will work in small groups, your group's contributions will then be critiqued by the other participants. Upon completion of the response activity, you will then be invited to submit additional needs, concerns, and educational aspirations.

From the community's response to the progress reported and a refinement of additional data submitted by the participants will evolve an updated set of community based goals for your school.

CARD A

GOAL NO. _____

DO YOU AGREE WITH THE STATUS AND RECOMMENDATIONS FOR THIS GOAL AS JUST PRESENTED? (PLEASE INDICATE YOUR VOTE IN EACH BOX IF LESS THAN UNANIMOUS.)

WE AGREE	WE DISAGREE

* *

IN THE SPACE BELOW YOU ARE INVITED TO COMMENT ON YOUR ASSESSMENT OF THIS GOAL OR TO OFFER ANY ADDITIONAL CONCERNS OR RECOMMENDATIONS.

_____

_____

_____

CARD B

NEEDS STATEMENTS NOT CURRENTLY INCLUDED IN OUR SCHOOL'S GOALS. (PLEASE PLACE ONLY ONE STATEMENT ON EACH CARD.)

ANOTHER GOAL OF OUR SCHOOL SHOULD BE:

_____

_____

_____

KLB::r
9-18-74